

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 AID-05 PC-01 ACDA-12 /100 W

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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5418

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 1455

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, RW, XA, UG

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR PRAISES US ROLE IN AFRICA, DOWNPLAYS

UGANDAN "THREAT"

1. NIGERIA'S AMBASSADOR TO RWANDA MOSES OYETOLA ADEFOPE (RESIDENT IN KAMPALA) VISITED HERE DURING RWANDAN ARMED FORCES DAY CELEBRATIONS OCT 26 AND ALSO MADE COURTESY CALL ON AMB CRIGLER. HE LAUDED IMPROVING TIES BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND LAGOS, ESPECIALLY PLANNED VISIT BY PRESIDENT CARTER, AND HE PRAISED NEW US ACTIVISM IN AFRICA GENERALLY: "FIFTEEN YEARS LATER, USG IS FINALLY PLAYING POSITIVE ROLE WHICH PRES KENNEDY INTENDED." QUOTED FORMER SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN KAMPALA AS SAYING US ACTIVISM WAS BECOMING "REAL HEADACHE"FOR USSR, ADDING HIS OWN COMMENT THAT SOVIETS HAD HAD IT TOO EASY FOR TOO LONG IN AFRICA.

2. OYETOLA HAD FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON AMIN AND ON EAST AFRICA:

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A. AMIN IS ABOVE ALL AN EGO-MANIAC, LARGELY BLUFF AND BLUSTER. WE SHOULD REMEMBER HE WAS TRAINED BY BRITISH AS "SUICIDE FIGHTER" AGAINST KENYAN MAU-MAU. TOTALLY UNEDUCATED, WITH GUERRILLA FIGHTER'S INSTINCT FOR SEL-PRESERVATION, HE REACTS TO PERCEIVED THREATS FIRST AND ONLY REFLECTS LATER. ABOVE ALL, HE CANNOT TOLERATE PERSONAL AFFRONT, AND MOST OF HIS BLUSTERING IS MERELY

TO REPAIR HIS OWN BRUSED EGO. HARSH TOWARD UGANDANS THEMSELVES, HE RARELY CARRIES OUT THREATS AGAINST FOREIGNERS UNLESS PROVOKED DIRECTLY OR PRESSED WITH UNSOLICITED ADVICE. PRIVATE BRITS, AMONG OTHERS, GET ALONG FINE AND "MAKE LOTS OF MONEY" IF THEY TEND TO THEIR OWN BUSINESS.

B. AMIN'S THREATS TO AMERICANS EARLIER THIS YEAR WERE BLUFF OF THIS SORT, MAINLY INTENDED TO REPAIR AMIN'S OWN WOUNDED EGO. UNLESS CORNERED, HE WOULD NEVER HAVE CARRIED THEM OUT, SAID OYETOLA. HE QUOTED AMIN PERSONALLY: "HARM THE AMERICANS? IMPOSSIBLE. WHY, I DEPEND ON THEM TO FLY AND MAINTAIN MY PERSONAL AIRPLANES*"

C. PERSONAL AFFRONT RECENTLY CAUSED AMIN TO EXPEL SOVIET AMBASSADOR ON ONLY 24 HOURS' NOTICE. ALTHOUGH WARNED BY COLLEAGUES NOT TO, AMBASSADOR CALLED ON AMIN IN STATE OF INTOXICATION AND GAVE HIM UNWELCOME ADVICE. HE LEARNED OF HIS EXPULSION VIA NEWS BROADCAST SAME EVENING.

D. UGANDA'S ECONOMY, WHILE HARDLY EBULLIENT, IS AT LEAST ENJOYING RELATIVE PROSPERITY RIGHT NOW THANKS TO COFFEE RECEIPTS. HARDSHIP IS NOT RPT NOT WIDESPREAD, AND SHOPS ARE GENERALLY FILLED WITH IMPORTED GOODS (HOW LONG THIS WILL LAST AS COFFEE PRICES DIP IS DOUBTFUL).
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DESPITE BLUSTER AIMED AT FORMER EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY PARTNERS, AMIN IS CAREFUL TO KEEP LIFELINE TO MOMBASA OPEN.

E. SOVIET AID NOTWITHSTANDING, UGANDA'S MILITARY THREAT TO NEIGHBORS IS NIL, AND OYETOLA SEES NO INDICATION OF ANY AGGRESSIVE DESIGNS. KENYA, HE COMMENTED, SHOULD BE MUCH MORE WORRIED ABOUT SOMALIAN IRREDENTISM.

3. OYETOLA FAULTED SUPER-POWER "ARMS MERCHANTS" FOR STIMULATING TROUBLES IN HORN, ADDING SOVIETS WERE NOW REAPING WHAT THEY HAD SOWN THERE. AFRICANS WERE FOOLISH, HE SAID, TO FIGHT OVER COLONIAL-DRAWN BORDERS NO MATTER HOW ARTIFICIAL. WHILE PRAISING US REFUSAL TO SUPPLY ARMS TO SOMALIS, HE CONCEDED THERE WAS A PLACE FOR ARMS AID IN SUPPORTING NATIONS, SUCH AS KENYA, FACED WITH GENUINE THREATS OF AGGRESSION. TRICK WAS TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THESE AND CASES ("LIKE ZAIRE") WHERE WEAPONS WOULD BE USED FOR INTERNAL REPRESSION.

4. COMMENT: OYETOLA IS A DELIGHTFUL, PROFESSIONAL

YORUBA DIPLOMAT IN HIS THIRTIES WHO PROFESSES TO ENJOY
LIFE IN KAMPALA BUT WHO ADMITS TO FINDING POLITICAL
CLIMATE HERE MUCH PLEASANTER. HE TENDS, IN OUR OPINION,
TO UNDER-RATE THE MEANER SIDE OF MARSHAL AMIN'S
CHARACTER.

5. DRAFTER: AMB.
CRIGLER

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